

Case Study

Pacific magazines

We create magazines people love

Customer

Pacific Magazines
Eveleigh NSW, Australia
www.pacificmagazines.com.au

Challenge

A large number of magazines was managed using a file folder based system with inadequate access permissions and version control, using 'offline' approvals on physical job bags, and without suitable live layout overview. This had to be switched overnight to WoodWing, while maintaining the editorial workflow, under an extremely tight deadline.

Solution

Implementing a robust system with structure, version control, user and group access rights, file routing and flatplan views, using Adobe InDesign and InCopy at its core, and to perform preparation, analysis, pilot and implementation all in parallel, within a month.

Products

- = WoodWing Enterprise
- = Content Station
- = Smart Styles and Smart Mover
- = Adobe InDesign and InCopy

Business benefits

- = Improved overview
- = Better workload management
- = Less edit and redesign time
- = Streamlined workflow
- = Future proof investment

Partners involved

Creative Folks
Marrickville NSW, Australia
www.creativefolks.com.au

Efficiency going up, down under

Within four weeks after selecting WoodWing, Pacific Magazines had switched its title Who Magazine to the new solution, assisted by system integrator Creative Folks. Fraser Crozier (PM) looks back on a hectic but rewarding month, together with Matthew Green (CF).

Whetting the appetite

Fraser Crozier, business liaison manager at Pacific Magazines, recalls the first time he saw WoodWing in action. "That must have been late 2006. Remco Koster, managing director of WoodWing Asia Pacific, demonstrated it in our office, along with Creative Folks. We immediately realized the huge potential of the product, but unfortunately we were not in a position to take part in a pilot back then. Our operating environment wasn't ready for it and the appetite, the need, was not yet there."

What eventually did whet the appetite? "Well, after that we had some major business changes, which resulted in a dedicated technology team, Group Applications. By then we were publishing some 25 titles, with a total circulation of over 2 million, but still using traditional folder structures and 'offline' job bag approvals. The acquisition of Who Magazine, which used a rudimentary editorial system, was the final spark that ignited our hunt for a new system."

No live overview

Fraser Crozier is crystal clear about the need for a professional editorial system. "Our file system was split into folders for brands and issues, and used Active Directory access permissions, but it relied heavily on good will. All users in a given brand could access all folders of a particular issue. Approvals were tracked manually on 'offline' physical job bags, which made file changes, synchronization and a good status overview a real challenge, to put it mildly. Offline is not a good place to be in

a busy publishing environment. And although we used a one hour snapshot mechanism on the file system, retrieval was so cumbersome that it was almost impossible to step back in time with any given job."

Lack of a 'live' layout overview was an additional problem. "We placed physical thumbnails into an InDesign grid as layouts were changed. A frustrating process. Articles were written in MS Word and then placed into a layout, disconnected from the original article. Subsequent changes were carried out in the layout, so there were no historical 'bread crumbs' leading back to preceding iterations. Version control was in fact nonexistent."



Who Magazine
Created using WoodWing Enterprise.

"Although we had not worked with WoodWing before, they clearly had a far superior product."

Fraser Crozier, business liaison manager at Pacific Magazines



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“The point of a pilot is to get the product up and out there and put it through its paces. So we really tested it to the limits.”

No competition

Why did Pacific Magazines select WoodWing over competing products? “Well, to be honest, there was little competition. We needed a robust solution with structure, version control, user and group access rights, file routing and flatplan views, using Adobe InDesign and InCopy at its core. That whittled the competition down to two; WoodWing and SoftCare.” But the gap was too big to even evaluate SoftCare. “The technical architecture was an important factor: application server, database, scalability and supported operating systems. Some of the fundamentals of SoftCare appeared to be flawed. Although we had not worked with WoodWing before, they clearly had a far superior product, so we didn’t even test SoftCare. Other key factors were local support, international reference sites and clear development advantages.”

Natural Adobe extension

Finally, also the cost was absolutely critical. “Times were tough back when we decided to take the project on, and exponentially tougher now. The price difference between WoodWing and SoftCare was a big factor, but it was a contributor, not the most important. We are always prepared to pay more for a better product, but fortunately that never came into the equation.”

Why was Adobe so important for Pacific Magazines? “We had to sell the solution to the end users. They already had a fair degree of expertise with Adobe InDesign, so the added WoodWing workflow pieces were a natural extension to their regime. WoodWing itself is also intuitive: users are encouraged to simply try, there is little need to browse manuals or hunt through help files. As a result, acceptance among users was high from the start.”

Partnership

Crozier had a good feeling about the company too. “WoodWing is a private company. Everyone in that organization wants the product to succeed, their livelihood depends on it. The size of the company also means that small changes are big changes. The owners, consultants and engineers are accessible, giving us much more flexibility than with larger corporations. We firmly believed we were entering into a partnership, not just a transaction. And we were right.”

Why did Pacific Magazines select Creative Folks as their technology partner? “We chose them because of their size, reputation and aptitude to accompany us on this exciting journey. They showed reliability and trust from the start, and had excellent local support. Without that we would never have purchased the product. I can highly recommend them to anyone.”



Prevention
lifestyle magazine for and about 40+ women

Analysis during implementation

Matthew Green, managing director at Creative Folks, joins in: “I can only say that it turned out to be a perfect match. Our office was nearby and we had a fair amount of WoodWing experience. Furthermore, our sales and project director Andrew Lomas had experience with QPS, the Who Magazine system. It enabled us to roll the magazine over to InDesign while maintaining the editorial workflow. Then WoodWing came to the table and allowed a pilot to be run, and the rest is history.”

The tight time frame surrounding the acquisition of Who Magazine put everyone and everything to the test, according to Crozier. “We pretty much went live within 3 weeks after selecting WoodWing. Our final analysis was literally happening during implementation, which will surely sound extremely risky. But we received strong support from both Creative Folks and WoodWing, and were confident that the workflow would hold up to our acid test. The point of a pilot is to get the product up and out there and put it through its paces. So we really tested it to the limits.”



www.woodwing.com



Matthew Green
Managing director at
Creative Folks

"It was a monster effort by all involved. The overall rollout took three weeks to plan, but less than a week to migrate and go live."

Good head start

Matthew Green describes the preparations. "First of all, we conducted a full workflow analysis at Who Magazine, together with Pacific Magazines. We needed to understand who were involved, what they did, why they did it that way, and compare it with a theoretical approach. Of course Andrew Lomas became the new 'workflow champion'. He was able to decipher the QPS workflow and transmogrify it into WoodWing speak. That gave Pacific Magazines a good head start." Crozier agrees. "It immediately proved both their value and skills. And mirroring the old workflow made it easier for the users to adopt, even if some of the terminology was different. But the real challenge was the deadline. We had to turn off the old QPS on a particular Wednesday evening, and start in WoodWing the following Thursday morning. We had to change the workflow, upgrade the computers from Xpress and CopyDesk to InDesign and migrate all the editorial files."

Proof of concept

Green smiles. "It was a true team effort, with Group Applications and IT departments from Pacific Magazines, directed and guided by ourselves and WoodWing Asia Pacific. First we had to analyze the current taxonomy in the live QPS server. Andrew used a matrix to map that to the WoodWing taxonomy and database, which we presented back to the senior editorial team of Who Magazine. Together we decided which additional WoodWing features would make immediate implementation, and which ones would be phased in after the initial rollout. We then presented a proof of concept in full to the senior Who team. There were only minor modifications, so after user acceptance we could quickly agree on a rollout timeline." Crozier takes over. "That's when we really could get cracking: configuring the new WoodWing Enterprise server, creating and testing the workflow, installing InDesign, InCopy and Smart Connection plug-ins on user computers, testing with the live server, creating new InDesign Templates and so on. We also moved art directors from current production to allow upfront training."

In-room training

Green continues. "We super trained their deputy editor, Jeff Collerton, to become the

'site champion'. He was used to QPS, and together with us he tested the routing configuration of the articles and other aspects of the workflow."

Then it was time for some real content. Crozier: "We aimed at a head start, allocating resources from both art and editorial, to prepare for a quick turn over. A small group of writers checked in articles for advance issues and sections. Then we created some art pages in WoodWing using these articles, and routed them to subbing in InCopy to allow for practical user training in-room, and specific testing in advance."



New Idea meets the needs and interests of women in Australia

Overnight switch

Finally, it was time to turn the switch. Crozier: "Once everything was confirmed, the final pages left for press from QPS on Wednesday, and we set about migrating all articles and pages to WoodWing overnight, uploading all documents into their correct issues and sections, and - very important - with their correct status. It was a monster effort by all involved, but by Thursday morning we were 98% complete with only a few issues to resolve." Green: "Over the next week we provided in-room support, just to make sure the first issue and the correct sections of Who Magazine were sent to press on the correct days. In fact, the issue was even completed early on Wednesday! The overall rollout took three weeks to plan, but less than a week to migrate and go live."



www.woodwing.com

About WoodWing

WoodWing creates the most progressive solutions available on the market for the production of print and online publications. Rapid growth worldwide and success across the full spectrum of small to large publishers demonstrate that WoodWing makes the best tools for the best price.

WoodWing Software is located in Zaandam, The Netherlands, and has regional sales companies for Europe, the USA, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America. Customers are served through select partners.

WoodWing Europe

Zaandam, The Netherlands
info@woodwing.com

WoodWing USA

Detroit, Michigan USA
usa@woodwing.com

WoodWing Latin America

Monterrey, N.L., México
latinam@woodwing.com

WoodWing Asia Pacific

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
asiapacific@woodwing.com



www.woodwing.com

Which products does Pacific Magazines use now? Crozier sums them up: “WoodWing Enterprise, of course, and we purchased Smart Styles and Smart Mover as well. The latter to import data into Enterprise, and the former provides automatic formatting in InDesign. That kind of automation saves time and prevents errors. We also invested in Content Station. That product alone is unique enough to set WoodWing apart from all competitors. It has been designed to make it virtually future proof, and already it opens doors for solutions that would otherwise have been impossible. Combined with that, the Dossier feature takes the product up a serious jump. It allows us to introduce a workflow that ‘feels’ similar to the legacy file system workflow, which will give us a tremendous boost when implementing change management. And by the way, two other applications have been integrated as well: Elvis from Dutch Software, and PlanMaker fE from Van Gennep.”

Real-time review

The new solution has ‘settled in’. What are the main advantages so far? “On the management level, the business can now make much informed assumptions about the true effort required to produce a magazine. With the improved overview of issue completeness, managers and department heads can better manage the workload in production. That also offers transparency in whether the work effort is consistent, allowing for better work priming.”

Crozier leans forward. “We now even have editors who ‘live’ inside the Publication Overview application in Content Station. It provides senior editors with an unprecedented level of access to manage writers. They really like it, because it prevents misunderstandings and they can bring deviations from brief back on track in an early stage. Art directors have exactly the same experience; they can observe layouts in near real time, while the designers are working, and keep them on track with the briefs. This translates into less redesign work, saving a lot of time.”

Closing the loop

But the biggest advantage is undoubtedly in the streamlined workflow. “Exactly. The magazines that use the software have a structured workflow for the very first time. They spend a

lot less time hunting for files and a lot more time working on them, instead of the wrong ones, or not at all.”

Are there any plans for the future? “Sure! We have still around 200 seats to ‘fill’ and we will be expanding to encompass the image workflow as well. That will close the loop in the workflow, and allow a fully auditable process. And we’re very interested in other tools that are added to the Enterprise suite. We currently have a challenge in our Content Management Systems for the web because they are controlled externally. We want to integrate the workflow connectors with these external CMS’s, that will be a big focus for us.”

About Pacific Magazines

Pacific Magazines dominates the key publishing categories it operates in and publishes more than one in four magazines sold in Australia - including two of the three biggest selling weekly titles: That’s Life! (308,000) and New Idea (331,000). The combined portfolio reaches 43% of all Australians (aged 14+), 60% of all women and 26% of all men every month. The company is the magazine publishing arm of Seven, Australia’s largest television network.

About Creative Folks

Creative Folks are a WoodWing Gold Authorized Solution Partner for Australia and New Zealand. The IT services and solutions provider has been assisting its clients in the creative, advertising, media, publishing and printing industries industry for over 30 years, by increasing productivity, reducing downtime and optimizing creativity. The company has the size to manage complex projects and the flexibility to meet the demanding challenges of niche environments. A dedicated support team guarantees speedy resolutions of any question or issue. Their skills and technical expertise are recognized by international vendors like Adobe, WoodWing, Apple and Microsoft. The client list includes names such as ACP Publishing, David Brown Graphics, Hassell International Architects, Roving Enterprises, Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising and Yaffa.